

A Case Study of Happiness Index by Local Government: – Gross Arakawa Happiness (GAH) in Arakawa City –

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【Introduction】

Happiness Index

In recent years, Happiness Indexes have attracted interest as an indicator of quality of life for communities across the globe. Gross National Happiness (GNH), an index that was advocated by Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, is famous as a Merkmal of Happiness Indexes. Recently, many other countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and various organizations including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), have attempted to construct their own respective Happiness (or well-being) Indexes. The Happiness Index of France is known as the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, while that of OECD is known as the Better Life Index. Japan is following the tide of the times by attempting to construct its own Happiness Index.

A Happiness Index is a tool that can be used to measure the level of happiness of people in a given community. In other words, a Happiness Index would provide an accurate picture of the population's overall quality of life measured by a variety of factors.

A number of administrative organizations, including those in both national and local government, have paid much attention to the Happiness Index in the hopes that it will provide an accurate reflection of the happiness of the people. It is necessary for a nation to consider what happiness really means for its citizens in order to implement the best policies. Many government agencies and public organizations recognize that the index is especially relevant to sustainable policy-making, and have taken initiative to create one. Although it is not clear how Happiness Index works for the policy-making, it might be the most valuable tool to create effective policies that distinguishes economic indicators.

In this paper, the approach that was taken by Arakawa City (located in Tokyo) in order to create a Happiness Index is introduced. Arakawa City pioneered the research of a Happiness Index that could be used by local government in Japan. The city published the proposed index in the Interim Report of Gross Arakawa Happiness (GAH) in August 2011, though the index itself is a work in progress.

This paper analyzes the GAH project in order to provide examples of the methods used by the Japanese government to construct a happiness index. The paper will introduce the unique approach taken by Japanese government officials to make a happiness index for the local people of Arakawa City while offering a discussion on the current state of the happiness index and its outcomes. The project can be viewed as both a case study of happiness research from an academic standpoint as well as an opportunity to report on the present state of the research project. While few academic papers have referred to the research of GAH, some administrative reports have studied the research carefully. Therefore one of the main objectives of this paper is to examine in further detail the academic aspects of happiness research. Concretely, the paper presents possible impacts of the policy using the index.

The Approach by Arakawa City

Arakawa city is one of 23 special districts that make up the metropolis of Tokyo. It is mostly flat geographically. The city has a population of about 205,142 (as of August 1, 2011), but is a rapidly aging society. Of the population, 22.7% of senior citizens are 65-years-old or greater (as of May 1, 2011). The city boasts a friendly atmosphere in its *Shitamachi* region, which is “the traditional shopping, entertainment and residential districts of Tokyo” (Collick, Hinata, & Tanabe, 1997), which characterizes the strong interpersonal relationships of those in the community. At the same time, a new large-scale residential quarter has recently been established in the area, and a lot of new residents have moved in. Arakawa City is thus becoming a region with mixture of old and new citizens.

In November 2004, Taiichiro Nishikawa was elected as the head of the city government. After that, the city promoted the domain, “district government should work to promote the happiness of its citizens” under his administration. The domain is recognized as Arakawa city’s slogan, as happiness is the special field that the city wished to emphasize. Namely, it clarified that Arakawa City placed great importance on the people’s happiness at the time.

Soon after, the city started to practice policies that would improve people’s happiness and further set out to design a Happiness Index which they titled “Gross Arakawa Happiness” (GAH) in light of the “Gross National Happiness” (GNH) index advocated by Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan. A special project team assigned with constructing the GAH index was formed in Arakawa City’s municipal office the following year in 2005. In 2006, a few members of the team were dispatched to Bhutan, the worldwide pioneer of the Happiness Index, to learn the contents of the GNH index and of how it had been applied to policy making in the country.

The most important matter at the time was to know whether people were happy, and what the administration needed to do in order to improve their happiness. The city, therefore, decided to hold an Arakawa City Administration Public Opinion Poll to investigate the actual living conditions of the city’s people. The poll was expected to show how much people felt that they were happy.

In addition to this, the city drew up a “Basic Conception of Arakawa City in 2007” based on a general view of what things would be like 20 years in the future. This plan was the first-priority objective of the city government. The vision of the plan is that the policies to be drawn up now should work to improve the happiness of all people in the future. The theme of the Basic Conception of Arakawa City is thus “A city where the happiness of all citizens is truly realized,” which means that everyone can feel happy in the city. The six specific visions for the city are suggested in the plan as follows:

1. A city that promotes lifelong health
2. A city that promotes better childcare and education
3. A city that boasts innovative industries
4. A city that is dedicated to environmental progress
5. A city of culture and creativity

6. A city that is peaceful and safe

These components will become the foundation of the people's happiness. That is to say, Arakawa City created the plan based on the assumption that these six components—health, childcare and education, innovative industry, environmental progress, cultural creativity, safety and peace—are necessary topics of administrative action for improving the happiness level among people. The city, in this way, was able to construct the basis of GAH.

The Establishment of a Research Institute

Arakawa City laid the foundation for starting the full-scale research of GAH over the span of about 5 years as explained above. After that, the city explored a way to embody the objectives in GAH. GAH would, after all, be a Happiness Index, which would require that the metaphysical “happiness” be turned into a physical “index.”

At first, the city administration decided to establish a research institute named the Research Institute for Local Government by Arakawa City (RILAC) in 2009 in order to transfer the GAH project to the institute. Because a lot of investigation and research was necessary for making the Happiness Index, a professional organization for the research was required.

RILAC was originally founded as a city-based think tank aiming to contribute to the healthy development of the regional society by performing investigations and research from diversified and mid/long-term aspects, and offering opinions as to how to better policy making ability so that Arakawa City can manage both local government and high-quality residential services (RILAC, 2009). Although Arakawa City's local government established the institute, it is managed in the form of an independent administrative agency. The independent organization can therefore conduct research more freely and from a standpoint different from the government. At the same time, the organization has the advantage that the study results can be reflected in the policy making of the district government because of its government origin.

It is an advanced and unusual case in Japan (it is the first one in Tokyo) that the local government started up a think tank as an independent organization for the betterment of the regional administration. Moreover, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government certified RILAC as a nonprofit organization in August 2011. RILAC is now expected to work in the interests of the public.

RILAC took over the project for GAH from Arakawa City in 2009, and the project is still continuing. Moreover, the institute has performed various other researches as a think tank. Research topics covered so far are child poverty and social exclusion. RILAC is planning to launch a Local Community Empowerment Research Project, a Support for handicapped Orphans Research Project and Customer Service and Motivation for City Employee Research Project this year. Nevertheless, the GAH Research Project will be the main focus over the next few years.

[Research Process]

The Research Project of Gross Arakawa Happiness (GAH) by RILAC and the City Office Purpose of the Research

The main goal of the GAH Research Project is, as stated above, to establish an original Happiness Index so that the administration can monitor any changes of the happiness level of its citizens and reflect the results in their policy making. Improving the happiness of the people will lead to the accomplishment of the Basic Conception, which Arakawa City determined as their first-priority objective.

RILAC has the following three missions for carrying out the project:

1. Construction of the concept of happiness
2. Data analysis of public surveys regarding the happiness index
3. Examination of the happiness index by Arakawa City

The construction of the concept of happiness is to make clear the concept of happiness for the citizens of Arakawa. The happiness here can be different from the definition of happiness as proposed by the national government or others used in other countries because the happiness under consideration by the local research institute specifically targets the people of Arakawa City. ("The people of Arakawa City" includes workers and students in Arakawa city as well as residents.)

Structure of the Research Project

The staff members of RILAC are composed of researchers who carry out research for each project, and who also organize advisory committees and study groups when necessary. For the GAH Research Project, the staff decided to organize both a Research Group and a Working Group, each with their own respective duties, so that these groups could set up the Happiness Index from different points of view. Members of the Research Group include visiting researchers, workers of Arakawa City, and researchers from RILAC, while members of the Working Group are limited to workers of Arakawa City, and researchers from RILAC (Figure 1-A. Structure of GAH Research Project, RILAC 2011a).

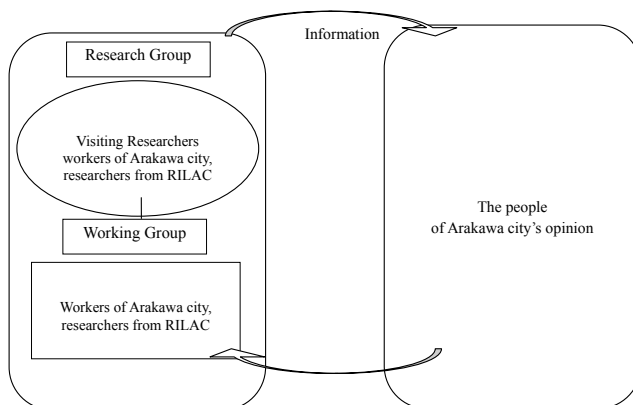


Figure 1-A. Structure of the GAH Research Project

(Translated from the original Japanese document by the author.)

The role of the Research Group is to hammer out a specific course of action for the project. To decide the essentials, some of the members are specialists of various fields such as social moral philosophy, industrial organization, social psychology, and economy, and others are Arakawa city officials as well as researchers from RILAC. They are supposed to discuss in what direction the research should go and consider the best course from each perspective. In total, 12 research group meetings have been held as of August 2011.

The Working Group plays a different role from the Research Group. Members of the group are fairly young staff from the Arakawa City Office, and they get together from different public workplaces. Some group members work for administrative offices, and others work as specialists, such as a public health nurse, a nursery school teacher, or a building trade worker. They might not have the experience of like members of the Research Group, but they work in places close to citizens and regularly hear the voice of the city's people, because they are in the front line of the public service. In other words, the Working Group is expected to make use of youthful talent. Members share their experiences and views with others and try to reflect their opinions to the happiness index from the point of view of their work experience. It is likely that such a characterized approach will make it possible to create a Happiness Index connecting civilians and policy makers. This approach is a unique and remarkable feat that was achieved in the process of designing a Happiness Index. Such a working group has yet to be seen in the world. The Working Group has conducted independent surveys, research, and interviews, and has held 36 meetings as of August 2011.

Research Method

Arakawa city announced the Basic Conception in 2007 to set up a basic administrative goal so that its people may feel happy. In order for the project members to realize the goal, they adopted many study methods to accomplish it. The main methods the project has used include studying surveys of previous works, data analysis, interviews with citizens, and group discussions. In addition, the city office has held the Arakawa City Administration Public Opinion Poll every year since 2006 in an attempt to understand what its people need to be happy.

To make the Happiness Index, the project members have adopted two methods for the GAH Index. These are the goal-oriented and the needs-oriented approach. The research project developed these approaches.

Research Process

The research project came about around the same time RILAC was established in October 2009, as mentioned above. The project assigned the Research Group and Working Group the following month. To begin with, these groups worked together on the confirmation of the present situation by performing an analysis of the Arakawa City Administration Public Opinion Polls of the recent five years. Arakawa City asked a lot of questions regarding happiness to the subjects of the survey. For instance, "Do you feel happy?" and "Choose five from several options that you think are important for you to live a happy life with respect to the policy making practices of the city" (Arakawa City,

2011a) are taken as examples from the questionnaire. The former question was meant to ask if the participants were happy subjectively, and it has been clarified that 71.7% of the people thought themselves to be happy at least to some extent (26.2% of the people felt happy very much and 45.5% of the people felt happy for a little.) The answers from the opinion poll show a crucial insight for the GAH project team members. Thus, the project team members could estimate that roughly seven in ten people felt basically happy, but that still there was room for improvement.

The Research Group and the Working Group discussed and shared their basic idea of happiness from different perspectives. There are a lot of words that are used to express the emotion “happy” such as content, cheerful, joyful, and delighted. The Research Group and the Working Group of the research project therefore discussed the meaning of “happy” to form a concept of the abstract idea. To be concrete, a discussion concerning the difference between happiness and satisfaction was one of the arguments. For example, a member commented “I think that marriage makes me happy, but I don’t feel satisfaction with my life, probably.” Even though the members’ discussion of happiness didn’t come to any final conclusion, the discussion gave members a prompt to think about happiness.

In addition, the project members discussed the expected index of happiness. Firstly, they discussed which was more important for the index, between subjective happiness and objective happiness. As happiness is an individual feeling, some project members insisted that GAH should be a measurement that values an individual’s happiness subjectively. Other member argued, however, that the administration of Arakawa city ultimately expects to make use of GAH for its policy making, so the index should be an objective measurement from a government perspective. Therefore, the members agreed to create the index by combining the subjective and objective components.

Another topic related to the expected index was in what way one should measure how the happiness level resulted from “output” or “outcome.” The output is a result of implementing policies, whereas the outcome is a result brought about by implementing policies. An example output would be that the government increases daycare centers as a public service, while the outcome would be a reduction in the burden of childcare resulting from the increased number of daycare centers. The Research Group, which had a duty to decide the foundation of the research, confirmed both output and outcome were necessary to investigate the happiness index because it was expected to measure outcome, and that the output would be a basic determinant for measuring outcome.

Thus, the project members finally started to make the Happiness Index. The members agreed to focus on two fields of happiness at first, which were the health and childcare/nursery fields, and divided the Working Group into the Health Team of the Working Group and the Childcare/nursery Team of the Working Group for their effective operations. The reason that “health” and “childcare/nursery” were chosen as the first two fields for research was because of the results of Arakawa City Administration Public Opinion Poll from 2006 to 2010. People placed “stay in good health” as the first priority to be happy in life and “good relationship with their family” as the second for all 5 years that the poll was administered (Arakawa City, 2011b). (For example, 86.1% of the people answered

“stay in good health” and 56.0% of the people answered “good relationship with their family.”) The poll clarified that health and family are important elements of happiness. That is to say, to improve the happiness degree in these fields was their “need” in the city. Also, “healthcare” and “childcare” are parts of the six important fields that the Basic Conception of Arakawa City in 2007 determined. For that reason, “health” and “childcare/nursery” were prioritized to form critical parts of the GAH index in the research project.

The process of making an index differed between the two teams of working groups. The Health Team of the Working Group focused on the collection and analysis of existing data, such as annual administrative evaluation reports and previous survey reports. Although it was clear that many people thought that being healthy was essential for their happiness according to the results of the Arakawa City Administration Public Opinion Poll, they did not always identify their physical and mental condition to others, or to the administrative office. The team of the Working Group, therefore, could not gather so much information about what people needed for their health through interviews because health issues were personal and sensitive information. Therefore, the group analyzed some existing data from earlier surveys, extracting the essential elements (Figure 2, “Method of making the GAH index (#1),” RILAC, 2011c). Also, the team members discussed what was needed for improving people’s health and categorized them as items of the happiness index.

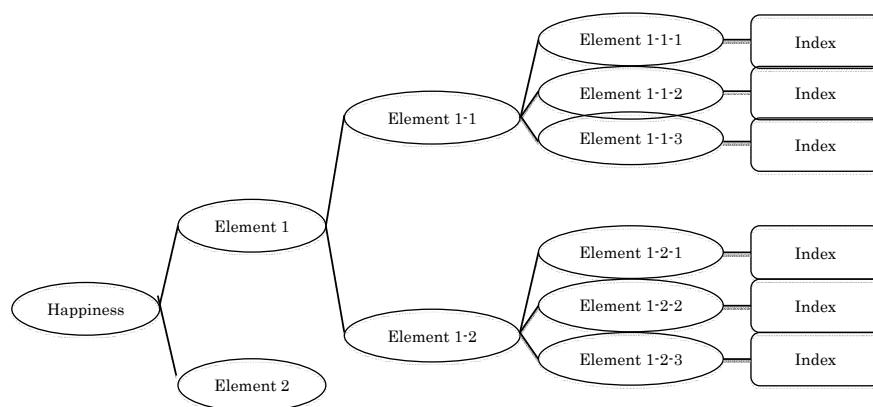


Figure 2. Method of making GAH index (#1)

(Translated from the original Japanese document by the author.)

The Childcare/nursery Team of the Working Group, on the contrary, concentrated on listening to people’s opinions about what they needed for their childcare or nursery through interviews as well as through data analysis and discussion among group members. People who were engaged in childcare or nursery often had given their specific demands to the city office. For example, they frequently notified that they wanted the administration to increase the number of daycare centers. The greater the participation of women in public affairs, the greater increase of demand to establish more such

support centers for childcare. The project teams, therefore, visited nurseries, interviewed with people in concern, analyzed the results, and sorted them as items of the happiness index. (Figure 3, “Method of making the GAH index (#2),” RILAC, 2011c). Such a need-oriented analysis gets the idea of demands research from D. Easton (Easton, 1965). The Childcare/nursery Team of the Working Group tried the “Demand Side Approach.” Like this, it might be difficult to precede happiness index in the unification approach for different fields because of its distinctive characteristics.

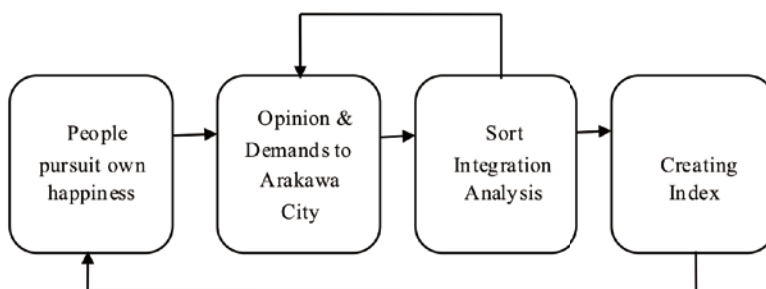


Figure 3. Method of making the GAH index (#2)

(Translated from the original Japanese by the author.)

【Result】

The Interim Research Result – The Proposed Happiness Index of Arakawa

In August 2011, RILAC announced part of the proposed GAH. The Happiness Index of Arakawa City, GAH, would ultimately be composed of six indexes (health, childcare and education, industry, environment, culture, and safety and peace). The fields of the index were based on the Basic Conception of Arakawa City in 2007 (six components - health, childcare and education, innovative industry, environmental progress, cultural creativity, safety and peace). In the future, “Implementation of the Plan” will be added as a horizontal field. The Implementation of the Plan might include ideas of participation in planning, information dispatch, finance administration, and the personnel affairs strategy (Figure 4, “System of Arakawa city where the happiness of all citizens is truly realized,” RILAC, 2011b).

At this point, the two components of the Happiness Index in childcare and childcare/nursery are completed. The indexes are the fruit of the research project, and they would be a breakthrough to expand and create a Happiness Index in other fields. The detailed index of each field is described below.

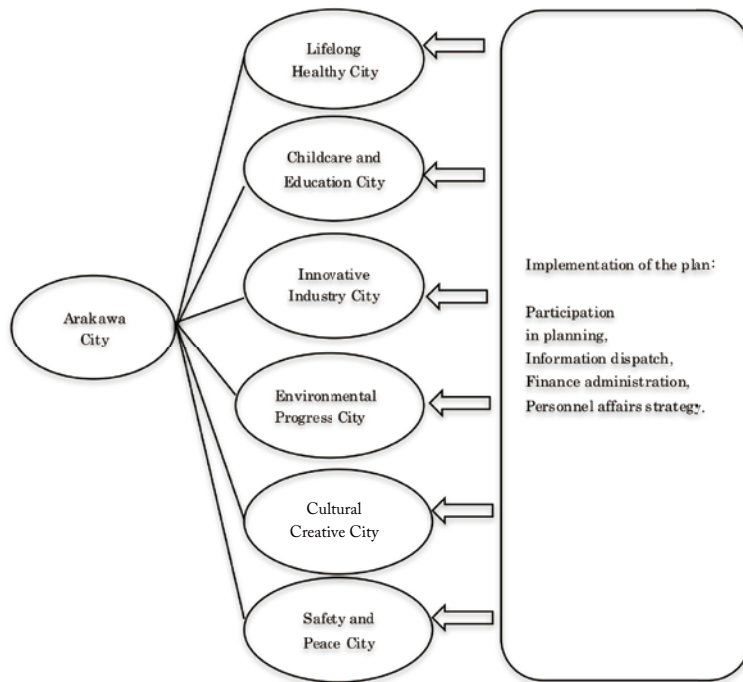


Figure 4. System of Arakawa city where the happiness of all citizens is truly realized

(Translated from the original Japanese by the author.)

The Proposed GAH in the Health Field

The health index is based on the image of “Lifelong Healthy City” in Arakawa City Basic Conception in 2007. The Basic Conception describes the image of a Lifelong Healthy City as “a city that everyone can stay healthy in mind and body and live actively throughout their lifetime…(a) local community where everyone including the elderly and disabled people can live in safety and have a lot of energy” (Arakawa City, 2007a).

In the index, the Health Team of Working Group designated the components of health, which are Physical Health, Mental Health, and Environment for Health. The former two components are indispensable for people to be in good health, and the last one means that the surrounding environment should help keep people healthy. Under the three components, smaller components are classified. Exercise, Meals, and Bodily Rest are classified as the smaller components of Physical Health. Connectedness, Social Roles, and Mental Relaxation make up the smaller components of Mental Health. Also, Environment for Health is composed of Community Support, Quality of Life, and Community Livability (Table 1, “Health Index of GAH (a tentative plan),” RILAC, 2011d).

Table 1. Health Index of GAH (a tentative plan)

(Translated from the original Japanese document by the author.)

Category				Index	Numerical
1	2	3	4		
I Lifelong Healthy City	Health			Vitality (General wellness)	72.9% (2010)
				Life expectancy	Arakawa City...Male 80.79, Female 84.15 Japan...Male 81.79, Female 84.81 (2008)
		Physical Health		Degree of free body movement	—
				Healthy life expectancy	Male 79.83, Female 81.81 (2008)
				Premature death rate	Male 123.4 Female 100.9 (2008)
				Incidence of people requiring long-term care	17.7% (2008)
				Rate of falling	20% (2010)
				BMI of 25 or more	Male 23% Female 16% (2008)
			Physical Activity	Frequency of exercise	—
			Meals	Level of satisfaction with one's diet	73.8% (2010)
			Bodily Rest	Rest level of body	—
		Mental Health		Suicide rate	2.78% (2008)
				Depression rate	26.9% (2010) *over 65 years old
				Mental Stability	—
			Connectedness	Social connectivity (Level of actually feeling a connection with other people)	—
			Social roles	Level of actually feeling that one is living a meaningful life	—
			Mental relaxation	Mental relaxation (level of actually feeling relief of mind)	—
		Environment for Health		Level of actually feeling that one's environment is suitable for the preservation of health	—
				Number of welfare recipients per million population	24.2 (2009)
				Average medical expenses for individuals under public health care	¥285,578 (2009)
				Number of medical facilities per 10,000 population	10.2 (2007)
			Community support	Ratio of people who feel that they can get support from the community when needed	—
			Quality of Life	Percentage of people who feel satisfied with their lifestyle	—
			Community livability	Percentage of people who feel satisfied with their living environment	83.8% (2010)

Furthermore, the index of the field has been added by the classification of the life stage:

- Early Childhood Period (0 to 17)
- Youth and Adult Period (18 to 64)
- Advanced Age Period (65+)

Table 1 indicates the tentative happiness index in the health field.

The four categories on the left show the composition of factors required for good health. Category 3 shows Physical Health, Mental Health, and Environment for Health, which are components for people's health mentioned above. Category 4 shows the small components, and Index supporting along the items of Category 3 and 4 components are listed in the middle of the row. The multilayer-like structure can be seen in the table.

Also, Vitality and Life Expectancy are installed at the top of the table. This means that these categories form a common index for happiness in the health field. In other words, if Physical Health, Mental Health, and Health for Environment are improved, the index of Vitality and Life Expectancy can also be improved.

Moreover, Environment for Health is notable for this index. It is a unique characteristic of a local government index. The item has small components such as ratio of livelihood protection, ratio of people who feel that they can get support from the community when needed, and percentage of people who feel satisfied with their living environment.

The Proposed GAH in the Childcare/nursery Field

The Happiness Index in the Childcare/nursery field is supposed to be made to eventually implement the vision of "Childcare Education City" as proposed by the Basic Conception of Arakawa City in 2007. The goal is "to satisfy the childcare environment, and to improve the city so that people of the child-rearing generation can continue working, and can have and rear children without anxiety," and also "to improve the city so that the local communities offer quality education to young children, and to give them a lifelong education" (Arakawa City, 2007b). The targeted children for the current index are pre-school age (0 to 5). The index will be improved when the research focusing on children age 6 and up is finished (Table2 Health Index of GAH (a tentative plan), RILAC, 2011e).

The index is based on the needs and demands derived from the notification of citizens to the city office and through interviews, as mentioned above. The Childcare/nursery Team of the Working Group realized the public's needs and demands by collecting and analyzing existing reports: "Report of Needs for the Support to the Next Generation in Arakawa City" in 2010 and "Report of Demands for Support to Child Care in Arakawa City" in 2010. These reports published by the Arakawa City Office took note of the demands made by the city's inhabitants. In addition, the Childcare/nursery Team of the Working Group collected data through interviews with people who work for nurseries supported by the city. An analysis of the data taken from the city office and the interviews is reflected

Table 2. Child Care/nursery Index (a tentative plan)

(Translated from the original Japanese document by the author.)

Category				Index	
1	2	3	4		
II Childcare and Education City	Child Care/nursery(pre-school age (0 to 5))	(1) Child-rearing ideals	Child-rearing ideals	Achievement of desirable traits in own child	—
		(2) Child care support	Childcare support programs	Degree of contribution of childcare support programs by district government for children who participate in daycare	—
				Degree of contribution of childcare support by local government for children raised at home	—
				Degree of contribution to early child development by childcare services	—
				Number of children on the waiting list for a vacancy at a daycare/nursery	49 (2009)
				Total capacity of daycare/nursery facilities in Arakawa City	—
				Fertility rate of Arakawa City	1.16 (2008)
		(3) Economic support	Economic support from Japanese government	Degree of government contribution toward child support	—
		(4) Environment	City and Facilities	Degree of user-friendliness of public facilities	—
				Number of diaper changing stations and breast-feeding areas	45 (2009)
			Recreational areas	Degree of satisfaction with recreational areas	—
			Opportunity for hands-on activities	Degree of satisfaction with hands-on activities	—
		(5) Community	Family	Quality of family relationships	—
				Number of reported child abuse cases	new 38, total 401 (2009)
				Number of consultations with childcare centers	At Center for family and children (new, 26, total 159), (2010.4) health center ⁹¹ (2010.4)
			Community resources	Ratio of people who seek aid from family/friends or childcare consultants	—
			Local Community	Degree of understanding and support within the local community	—
				Degree of satisfaction with public spaces	—

	(6) Safety and Security	District programs for public safety and security	Degree of contribution to childcare by public safety/security programs	–
		Feeling of safety and security	Degree of safety/security for children	–
			Number of crime against children	0 (2009)
	(7) Information resources	Availability of childcare information from Arakawa district	Availability of childcare information from Arakawa district	–
			Number of visitors to Arakawa district's childcare support website	55,000 (2009)
		Quality of Arakawa city's childcare information resources	Quality of Arakawa city's childcare information resources	–

in the items of the Happiness Index of the childcare/nursery field.

The following table has four categories. Category 1 is “Childcare Education City,” which is the future image of the city. Category 2 identifies the object of the index as “Childcare/Nursing (age 0 to 5).” Category 3 has 7 items, which seems important for people's happiness in the city as a result of analysis of their needs and demands. Also, Category 4 is classified into the fields mentioned in Category 4.

The category “(1) Ideal of Own Child Care” is a distinguished index. The index was measured by asking people raising children whether they are achieving their ideal childcare. In other words, their answers show if they are satisfied with their childcare, and if their happiness in childcare is achieved.

“(2) Child care support” shows the administrative support for childcare. The subject of the index covers all people including a person practicing childcare at home and a person practicing it in a nursery. “(3) Economic Support” measures whether the administration can offer the required economic support to people raising children. “(4) Environment” is an index to measure the number of installed facilities for childcare as well as recreational spaces for children. “(5) Community” is an index to measure the support from key people for childcare, including family and neighborhood. The index of “(6) Safety and security” is supposed to measure the safety and security from the service supplier side and the service recipient side. “(7) Information resources” is an index to measures how much people raising children can get childcare support information and how often they make use of it.

These indexes are still undergoing discussion. The indexes were made, as prototypes of GAH, and will need more improvement by further discussion among the Research Group and the Working Group members as well as more investigation and data analysis this year.

[Conclusion]

This report introduces the research methodology used to create a happiness index in Arakawa city, a special ward located in Tokyo, Japan. The GAH Research Project is a unique project that has

attempted to construct a happiness index for the local people in order to improve local government policies in the future. The project also instigated the organization of an independent research institute in the local government in order to carry out its research. The future state of this project may become a model case of local governance in Japan that utilizes a happiness index as an invaluable tool for municipal policy-making. However, the GAH research project is still a work in progress, and there are some challenges to overcome.

At present, there are two main issues that require further consideration.

(1) The first issue targets how to finish up the GAH index, and how to make use of the Happiness Index when designing future policies. As previously noted, the GAH index is expected to contain six components that are based off of the Basic Plan of Arakawa City in 2007. The research project suggested the provisional GAH in the Health and Childcare/Nursery fields, which are two of the expected components. The other four components of Industry, Environment, Culture, and Safety will be needed to complete the index (in 2012, the second Interim report of GAH will be released). Moreover, it should be taken into consideration how the local government will make use of the GAH index for its policy-making once it has been completed.

The research project was developed with an administrative purpose: to attain the final goal of improving the people's happiness level in the city. This will be the first attempt made by the Japanese government to carry out policy-making with the help of such an index, so it should be considered carefully how the administration will apply the Happiness Index to its policies.

(2) The other issue to be considered is how the GAH research project will give citizens an opportunity to think about their own happiness. Although the city uses the word "happiness" in a variety of contexts, people do not always consider their own happiness. For example, the city announced that the administration is a system that operates to make its citizens "happy". Citizens, however, may not think too deeply about whether or not they are happy and what they might require in order to live happier lives.

Therefore, the municipal government expects the GAH index to encourage its citizens to think about happiness and what it means to them in greater detail. The city office held a symposium regarding GAH in October 2010 and published PR bulletins as part of its public relations strategy in order to motivate the city people to pay attention to their happiness beyond the Happiness Index.

As a review, several notable observations can be made from this case study:

- (1) The GAH project is a collaborative effort involving associate researchers, workers of Arakawa City, researchers from the research institute founded by local government, and the local people of Arakawa city.
- (2) The GAH Research Project provided the Arakawa City government an opportunity to encourage its citizens to think about happiness.
- (3) As the GAH Index is made by the local government, the research result can fulfill the needs of the local people in a timely manner.

The research project of GAH started as a local administrative activity. At first the project was a new attempt by the city government to make its people happier. Similar attempts to do this are rarely seen in the world. GAH should be put into practice and the results of its application should be carefully studied and reviewed.

The research of the GAH project is fully worth considering the methodology of local government policy making. GAH could be an important model case of a local government's take on a happiness index. While the research project of GAH is still underway and more detailed research is definitely needed, the research project of GAH still has a great potential to bring about positive changes in local policy-making that will work for the betterment of Japanese society.

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